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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 27 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The World Forestry Congress, attended by more than 2,500 participants from 136 countries, was held in Paris from 17 to 26 September.

Enclosed herewith is the text of the final declaration adopted by the Congress.

In view of the importance of this document, I should be grateful if it could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 77 (Development and international economic cooperation) and 78 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development).

(Signed) Jean-Bernard Mérimée
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

THE PARIS DECLARATION

THE TENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS,

Having assembled more than 2,500 participants from 136 countries from 17 to 26 September 1991;

Considering the theme of the Eighth World Forestry Congress, held in Jakarta in 1978, "Forests for People";

Considering the theme of the Ninth World Forestry Congress, held in Mexico City in 1985, "Forest Resources in the Integral Development of Society", and its manifesto which urged "all human beings of all nations and their governments, within the framework of their own sovereignty, to recognize the importance of forest resources for the biosphere and the survival of humanity";

Considering the International Conference "SILVA", held in 1986, which concluded with the "Proclamation of Paris on trees and forests";

Considering its own general theme "Forests, a heritage for the future" and all its detailed conclusions and recommendations that it has adopted on each theme discussed;

Considering the general concern about deforestation and degradation of the world's forests caused by competition for land, inadequate management and the emission of pollutants caused by human activities, all of which have caused, in various regions of the world, at different times, and to varying degrees of irreversibility, the deterioration of the forest heritage;

Considering that, rather than forest exploitation, the real causes of deforestation in developing countries are poverty, debt, underdevelopment, and the requirement to meet the basic needs of rapidly growing populations;

Considering that forest resources are an important factor of socio-economic development, and more especially of rural development;

Considering the responsibility of our generation to future generations for the world's natural heritage;

Addresses the public, political leaders, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, from the whole world:

Reminds them:

of the importance of the renewable goods and services provided by trees and forests, in the face of growing demand for construction materials, fuel, animals, food, fodder, recreation areas;

of the wealth and diversity of forest environments, and their positive role in water and carbon cycles, soil protection and the conservation of biodiversity;

of the availability, too often ignored, of techniques for the sustainable management of trees and forests, which can ensure the permanence and even lead to increasing their ability to provide goods and services;

that it is essential to avoid irreversible damage to the biosphere; and

of the advantages of long-term planning in the management of natural resources;

Asserts:

that the real challenge is to reconcile the economic use of natural resources with the protection of the environment through integrated and sustainable development;

that the solution of forest problems requires common efforts to reduce poverty, to increase agricultural productivity, to guarantee food security and energy supplies, and to promote development;

that forest management plans can be used as comprehensive tools to manage their economic, ecological, social and cultural functions, thus enlarging the concept of sustained yield;

that the preservation of specific forest areas in order to protect biodiversity constitutes a particular objective of forest management policy;

And recommends:

that all people be involved in the integrated development of their region, and that they be provided the institutional, technical and financial means to do so;

that land management planning be based on the land's potential and on long-term priorities, in order to determine sites that are best suited to be forested; that the needs of all people concerned, particularly those who depend on forests for their livelihood, should be carefully taken into consideration at the planning stage;

that the continuity of tree and forest management policies be guaranteed, given the need to manage forests on a long-term basis;

that the designation of certain representative or endangered forests as protected zones continue, and that they be integrated into national or international networks;

that appropriate silvicultural techniques, the extension of woodlands and the long-term use of wood be used to contribute to absorption of atmospheric carbon dioxide;

that agroforestry systems, afforestation and reforestation be developed more actively.

THE TENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Aware of the seriousness, the urgency, and the universality of developmental and environmental problems, emphasizing the renewable nature of forest resources, and convinced of the soundness of solutions afforded by sustainable management of all the world's forests, within the context of national forestry policies,

Solemnly calls upon decision makers to:

Commit themselves to the "Greening of the World" through afforestation, reforestation and sustainable management of the multiple functions of trees and forests; and to actions in the form of integrated programmes, involving the participation of all people concerned, in the context of national land management policies;

Assess developments in the forest heritage at a national and international level, drawing on the "Assessment of World Forest Resources in 1990" carried out by FAO;

Limit all emissions of pollutants that damage forests, and contain emissions of greenhouse gases, including those produced by power generation;

Adapt economic and financial mechanisms to the long-term approach required for forest management, and increase national and international financial provisions, particularly in favour of developing countries;

Work towards the harmonious development of international trade in forest products through the prohibition of any unilateral restriction, inconsistent with GATT; and promote the utilization of forest products;

Develop cooperative initiatives, at the political level, on clearly identified forestry issues of regional importance, such as the fight against desertification, the protection of forests, the management of major watersheds, etc.;

Strengthen and coordinate research and field trials, training and exchange of information, as well as greater cooperation in all disciplines that contribute to sustainable management of forest ecosystems;

Strengthen the activities and coordination between the relevant international organizations;

Integrate its conclusions and recommendations into the process of the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, in order to define "A non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests"; and, in the context of the current negotiations on biodiversity and climate change being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations;

Strengthen international cooperation, particularly in the context of the Tropical Forestry Action Programme (TFAP), of a Mediterranean FAP and of other future programmes;

Raise the awareness of the public, and more particularly of young generations, and inform it on forest issues so they will be better appreciated by all people;

Envisage ways of following up its recommendations, and invite FAO to inform the appropriate intergovernmental bodies and the Eleventh World Forestry Congress on the follow-up to the recommendations.